



PRESS RELEASE

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DOE Checking Hanford Tank Measurement Reading

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and its Hanford tank farm contractor CH2M HILL Hanford Group Inc. have performed follow up measurements on Hanford single-shell waste tank B-111 after an in-tank measuring device showed an initial two-inch drop in the tank's sludge level after Wednesday's earthquake. After recalibrating the measuring instrument in the tank, the reading returned to the normal tank level. Tank farm personnel confirmed this normal level reading with an independent measuring device called a Liquid Observation Well (LOW) probe. The LOW confirmed that there was no liquid level drop in tank B-111. Hanford personnel continue to monitor all measuring devices. In addition, Hanford personnel continue to update all appropriate authorities.

Tank B-111 is one of 67 Hanford waste tanks assumed to have leaked in the past. All pumpable liquids were removed from the tank in 1985, leaving an estimated 1,000 gallons of liquids and its valves and lines were capped. In addition to the 1,000 gallons of liquid that could not be removed, the tank also is estimated to have about 23,000 gallons of liquid trapped within its remaining sludge. Total waste volume is estimated to be about 237,000 gallons of mostly sludge.

Following the earthquake, tank farm personnel checked tank levels and the status of operating equipment. There is no indication of damage to tank farm facilities and equipment that could result in releases to the environment. Radiological surveys performed in and around the tank farms at Hanford show no change in radiation levels.

To date, 130 single-shell tanks at Hanford have had pumpable liquids removed, and 18 remain to be pumped. Readings based on all currently available data from automated monitoring systems show no level drops in other tanks at the Hanford Site. CH2M HILL Hanford Group will continue to closely monitor all the Hanford tank waste levels and systems.

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